

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6862

INFO DOD

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

USCINCSO

S E C R E T LIMA 6359

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, US, PE

SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSFER OF USSOUTHCOM

REF: STATE165406#

DOD FOR SECDEF AND JCS

1. REFTEL DOES NOT SPECIFY WHETHER PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER USSOUTHCOM ENTAILS SIMULTANEOUS TRANSFER OF COMPONENT COMMANDS ALONG WITH THEIR SPECIAL NON-DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES; E.G., TRAINING FACILITIES, DISASTER RELIEF FACILITIES, AIR-SEA RESCUE SERVICE, ETC. MISSION OF COURSE ASSUMES US OPERATIONAL UNITS WITH DEFENSE OF CANAL AS EXCLUSIVE OR PRIMARY MISSION WILL REMAIN IN CANAL ZONE FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE; WE DEFER TO DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY PANAMA FOR EVALUATION OF NEED FOR CONTINUATION IN CANAL ZONE OF DEFENSE COORDINATION FUNCTIONS NOW PERFORMED BY USSOUTHCOM.

2. IN COUNTRY TEAM'S OPINION, NON-DEFENSE FUNCTIONS OF USSOUTHCOM COULD BE CARRIED OUT EQUALLY WELL AND PERHAPS BETTER FROM CONTINENTAL US.

(A) THE SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION IN MAGNITUDE OF MAP OVER PAST FEW YEARS AND CORRESPONDING DECREASE IN MILGPS/MAAGS

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SUGGEST MAP (GRANT MATERIAL, FMS AND TRAINING) CAN BE

READITY ADMINISTERED FROM WASHINGTON WHERE MAAG MAINTAINS
SIGNIFICANT CONTACTS WITH DSAA AND SERVICE DEPARTMENTS.
TRANSFER OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE RESPONSIB-
ILITIES TO WASHINGTON WOULD NOT LESSEN, AND INDEED
COULD IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH FIELD.

(B) OFFICIAL MILITARY VISITS FROM WASHINGTON MIGHT BE
EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE COMING FROM PRINCIPAL HEADQUARTERS.

(C) IF TRANSFER OF USSOUTHCOM ALSO ENTAILS REMOVAL OF
DISASTER RELIEF SUPPLIES AND SURVEY TEAMS FROM CANAL
ZONE THIS WOULD INCREASE REACTION TIME AND TRANSPORT COSTS
OF BRINGING TEAMS AND RELIEF. HOWEVER, RELOCATION OF
DISASTER RELIEF CENTER SOMEWHERE IN SOUTHERN US NEED NOT
INCREASE SUCH COSTS INORDINATELY AND THERE MIGHT BE SOME
COMPENSATING ADVANTAGE OF EASIER COMMUNICATIONS, INCLUD-
ING THOSE BETWEEN STATE, DEFENSE AND AID/W AND DISATER
RELIEF CENTER.

3. WITH RESPECT TO PERUVIAN POINT OF VIEW, WE BELIEVE
MILGOV WOULD REGARD TRANSFER OF USSOUTHCOM FAVORABLY,
CONSIDERING IT IN LINE WITH ITS APPARENT FOREIGN POLICY
OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING US INFLUENCE AND/OR APPEARANCES
OF INFLUENCE IN HEMISPHERE AND CONSONANT WITH ITS STRONG
POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR PANAMA ON CANAL ISSUE. AT SAME
TIME, GOP WOULD PROBABLY CONSIDER SUCH A DECISION AS A
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION BY USG TOWARD SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME
OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WITH PANAMA, AND ALSO AS CONSISTENT
WITH OTHER ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF USG WITH RESPECT TO
"MATURE PARTNERSHIP" AND "LOW PROFILE" RELATIONS WITH LA
COUNTRIES. MILGOV WOULD PROBABLY COMPREHEND AND NOT
OBJECT TO RETENTION OF STRICTLY OPERATIONAL UNITS IN
CANAL ZONE.

4. IN SUMMARY, WE BELIEVE THAT NATURE AND SCOPE OF OUR
MILITARY PROGRAMS AND PRESENCE IN LATIN AMERICA HAVE
CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY NOT ONLY TO WARRANT BUT TO RECOMMEND
TRANSFER OF USSOUTHCOM FROM CANAL ZONE. IN OUR
OPINION, ALL OR MOST OF USSOUTHCOM'S FUNCTIONS CAN BE
CARRIED OUT JUST AS EFFECTIVELY OR MORE EFFECTIVELY FROM
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CONTINENTAL US. IN ADDITION, THERE WOULD BE ATTENDANT
POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC ADVANTAGES TO US VIS-A-VIS
PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT AND PROBABLY OTHER LA GOVERNMENTS.
BARNEBEY

NOTE BY OCT: #REFTEL APPARENTLY INCORRECT.

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